



The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, December 31. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. *I*N those remarkable TRYALS of WITCHES published this Week by Mr. Mather, 'tis said that Nineteen Witches have been lately Executed at New-England, and that there is an Hundred Witches still in Prison, Committed upon the Accusation of fifty Witches, some of Boston, but most about Salem and the Towns adjacent: This Relation is very strange and surprizing, I therefore desire your Sentiments of it?

Ans. You'll find an Answer to this Question in p. 48. of the said Book of Tryals, in these words:

THe Reverend and Worthy Author having at the Direction of his Excellency the Governour so far obliged the Publick as to give some Account of the Sufferings brought upon the Countrey by Witchcraft, and of the Tryals which have passed upon several Executed for the same:

Upon perusal thereof we find the Matter of Fact and Evidence truly reported, and a Prospect given of the Methods of Conviction used in the Proceedings of the Court of Salem.

Boston,
Octob. 11. 1692.

William Stoughton.
Samuel Sewall.

These two Gentlemen who give their Attestation to these Tryals published by Mr. Mather, being both of 'em Magistrates of known Worth and Integrity, we shall add no more by way of Answer to this Question, but only to acquaint our Readers, that if any thing occurs in reading which may occasion any doubt or dissatisfaction, We shall be ready if such Objections are sent in unto us to give what Explanation we are able, on such a strange surprizing Subject.

Quest. 2. At Colchester, where Sir Charles Lucas was shot, in the place where he fell, no Grass has grown since that time, there being the perfect shape of a Man's Body, and Grass growing all round it, and between the Sign of the Legs and Arms extended: The Reason of this?

Ans. This Question, with these immediately following it, were all three sent in the same Hand, and by the same Person, who affirms he's certain of the Truth of 'em all; — tho' we confess his being certain makes not us so, for things so strange, ought to have been better attested, than by a single unknown Affirmation: However, this of Sir Charles, &c. if not true, is easily confuted, and does but disserve the Royal Cause for which that Gentleman dy'd very bravely, which needs no Falshoods to defend it. If it be true, which may easily be known by any who live about those parts, and if they would inform us thereof, we'd own our selves oblig'd; it can hardly be deny'd, but that 'tis a Confirmation of the Justice of the Cause in which he suffer'd, and that, as our Histories say, contrary to the Law of Arms, he and the rest having Quarter promis'd 'em before they yielded.

Quest. 3. In my Lord Gainsborough's Park at Titchfield in Hampshire, some few years past a Deer was kill'd. After 'twas broke up, the Keeper went to quarter the Heart, and the edge of his Knife grated against something that was hard, which he found to be a Bullet near the middle of the Heart, about which Bullet there was a Callous skin, like Horn, by which 'twas suppos'd that the Deer had been formerly shot, and liv'd several years afterwards: The Reason of this?

Ans. There are some singular Cases of this Nature, which will puzzle all the Anatomists in the World to resolve 'em: There are Instances almost every day both of Men and Beasts, who have liv'd with Bullets or Stakes lodg'd in their Bodies. The famous Knife-blade which lay so long in the Peasant, has been sufficiently talk'd of; and we our selves have assurance of a certain Butcher that kill'd a Bullock which had been a little lame for a year or two before, and in cutting it up, found between the Shoulder and the Breast, quite cover'd over with hard flesh, about a Foot and a half of an old Hedge-stake, which it seems had been broken off there some years before. But this is nothing to any such substance in the Nobler parts, tho' even there strange things have been found. — Howel in his Letters, makes mention of a Person who lay for some years languishing of a Disease, which puzzled the Physicians, and Death was the only Cure, at whose Dissection there was found (as we remember) in the Left Ventricle of the Heart, a Living Serpent, and the German Virtuosi give us Instances much of the same Nature: But neither does this reach, for Violence from without seems more mortal than any such Substance bred within. To come yet nearer, there are some Surgeons who tell us of Wounds in the Pericardium which have been cur'd, tho' never any before that we met with in the very substance of the Heart; nor can it be easily suppos'd, that the Bullet in the present Case cou'd be lodg'd in any Vacuity there, without making a wound to get in. The Fact seems to be well enough Circumstantiated, and therefore 'tis neither civil, nor scarce reasonable to deny it; but for the reason and manner how Nature cou'd save it self harmless, notwithstanding that callous substance wherewith it guarded it self, as is very usual in such Cases, we must ingenuously acknowledge we can't resolve, and here propose it as a Problem to the best Professors in the Noble Art of Chirurgery, whose Judgments we shan't fail to communicate to the World concerning it.

Quest. 4. In Castle-Mallard-Walk in New-Forrest in Hampshire, there is an Oak which every Christmas-day buds forth leaves as big as those of a Gooseberry, tho' there's no appearance of any Leaf either the day before, or after: The reason of it?

Ans. We doubt very many Readers will be Infidels in this, as well as in the two former Questions. The Querist wou'd do well to be more particular in this Matter, and 'twou'd be a very pleasing Entertainment to the World, if he, or any other of the Neighbours, cou'd give an exact, and well-attested account, whether this be peculiar to that Oak, or other Oaks or Trees do the same near it? Whether it does this certainly and precisely on Christmas-day, and not before or after? In what manner the Leaves appear, whether all at once, or by degrees? and how they go away, whether they fall off, wither, or creep into the Bark again? Curiosities worth watching for one 24 hours, which if true, its a wonder how this Tree scaped Reformation in the last Age, when its superstitious Brother of Glastenbury was cut down by the Souldiers.

Quest. 5. One that by his daily Labour can procure but just from Hand to Mouth, for the subsistence of himself and Family: Query, Whether or no he be indispensibly bound to give to the Relief of others that are in want; and if he be, in what proportion?

Ans. That even those who only maintain themselves by daily labour, are bound to relieve such as are really Objects of Charity, viz. such as wou'd, and can't work for their Livings, is very clear from that of the Apostle,

Apostle, Let him that stole, steal no more ; (he seems by what follows to intend one that steals merely for want) but rather let him labour, working with his hands, that he may have to give to him that is in need. But still this reaches not our Case — Whether one that has a Family of his own, which he can but just maintain, ought to be thus charitable? We encline to the Affirmative, supposing he knows any who are more in want than himself, our reason is, because we scarce ever yet knew a Family wherein there were not sometimes some *superfluous Expences* ; however, what Person almost is there in the World, who does not sometimes himself spend what there's no absolute necessity of his doing, tho' he's never so mean, either at the *Coffee-house* or *Alc-house*, or some such way. — Now this ought to be spared for such uses as are before mention'd, if there's no other way to provide for 'em. But there's yet another reason why the Poor shou'd give to those who are yet Poorer, if any such can be found, and that is, *Because they themselves are poor* ; we mean, how great a Paradox soever it may seem, they would do well to give to others, because they want themselves, in hopes that their own wants may be reliev'd, it being the best way to obtain the assistance of Providence in our Necessities, according to our Condition and Circumstances our selves to assist others: Nor is the modest prospect and hope of such return and gain unlawful, so it be not the principal end of our Charity, which ought to be the *pleasing God*, for that can't be an *unlawful End* which is propos'd in the Scriptures as an Encouragement for our Action, but so is a *Retribution* for our Charity even in this Life, in too many Texts to mention. For the proportion of our Charity, common Discretion ought to guide that as well as all other Christian Virtues, the Circumstances of Men being so various, that 'tis perhaps impossible to fix a Rule that shall have no Exceptions ; tho' what has been the Judgment of several excellent Persons in our Church of this Matter, we may chance hereafter to enquire on another Question.

Quest. 6. Where a Woman may be found, that answers the Description of a good Housewife given by Solomon?

Ans. We suppose he means that 31 Prov. 10, &c. Where, the truth is, he gives such a Character of a good Wife as is not easily found in the following Instances ; "The Heart of her Husband does safely trust in her — she'll do him good and not evil ALL HER Days — she WORKS WILLINGLY with her HANDS — she RI- SETH while 'tis yet NIGHT — with the FRUIT of her HANDS she PLANTS a Vineyard — she lays her HANDS to the SPINDLE, (is a Spinster more than in Title) — she stretcheth out her HAND to the POOR — she openeth her Mouth with WISDOM, and in her Tongue is the Law of KINDNESS (no Fool, Gossip, or Scold) — she looks well to the way of her HOUSEHOLD, and eats not the Bread of IDLENESS — such she is — but where is she? for Solomon himself, who had try'd as many as most, says after all? Who can find a Virtuous Woman? He that has her, let him e'en make much of her, for he'll hardly e'er get such another.

Quest. 7. Whether a profane Swearer, a Whoremonger and Adulterer, &c. who to maintain his Pride and extravagant way of living, is necessitated to spend at least double what the just Income by his Place will allow, be a fit Person to be intrusted with any considerable Stock of Goods or Money of others? and whether it be safe and prudent to let such a Man pass one Year after another without requiring an Account of him? And it being vehemently suspected that he will e'er long pack up his Awls and betake himself to his Heels, whether it would not be an act of great Wisdom and Prudence in those that entrust him, to exact sufficient Security from him, 'till such time as his Accounts be fairly stated and clear'd? and whether it will not be a very great Reflection upon their Credulity and Discretion, if by the neglect and delay of so necessary an Expedient, (by way of Prevention) they shall come to be Convinced to their Cost, that the suspicion was not without just ground?

Ans. The whole Question appears to us to be written with such a spirit of Concern as if the Querist knew the whole to be Matter of Fact, we think that we need not so much give an affirmative Answer to the whole, as to advise the Querist to make use of his immediate Interest, both in discovering and advising his Friend (for it appears to us that there's one in the Case) and we think the necessity and reasonableness of the thing is so evident, that there was no need at all in asking our Advice, much less in delaying the Execution of the Affair, having now got it.

Quest. 8. Fentilmen. There is a certaine Bird knowne by the Name of a King fisher, take this bird when she is deade, and hang hur up by hur bill, and she will always hang with hur breaste to the Wind. Probatum est. I desire your Opinion of this, and why this more than any other Birds?

Ans. What your Kings-fisher may be in Wales we know not, but in other parts of England the Story is false, and taken upon trust, as several have experienc'd. Probatum est.

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